

CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE THE JUBILEE OF THE FOUNDING AND  
NAMING OF CANBERRA.

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"THE DAY WE CELEBRATE"

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen :

This is, of course, a great occasion for us. This is a new city. Your Majesty, you come from an old city, a city old in history, a city in which the modern builder may still, when excavating for foundations, come across remains of Roman or Anglo-Saxon civilisation. This is a new city and its history is in the making. We won't be able to attract the archaeologists and the historians for a long time yet, but our history is in the making and we are the people who are to play our part in making it.

It isn't so very long ago that on this very spot the Parliament House was opened. It was a year after you were born, Your Majesty, and your distinguished parents were here to open it. At that time, the population of Canberra was a few thousand. At the time of the ceremony we have just heard so vividly described, fifty years ago, the population was probably to be counted in hundreds. It is very interesting for all of us to know that of the pioneer settlers of that time, there are some well represented by their descendants in this gathering.

When I first came to Canberra myself, and it seems a long time ago, the population was six thousand. The population at present is something over 60,000. I am told that by 1970, it will be 100,000. Statisticians, Ma'am, always understand these things to perfection. And on top of that, the calculators of the Commission have, I believe, satisfied themselves and, indeed, satisfied me that by the turn of the century in the year 2000, the population will be a quarter of a million.

Now I refer to these interesting facts, Your Majesty, because 2000 is a little way off - a little after my own time, if I may confess it, but not after yours. I look forward, with the eye of prophesy, to the notion of my own descendants in 2000, standing up and drinking your health - your health - still the Queen! Older, but richer than ever in the love of your people. (Applause)

This for you, Ma'am, must possess a certain family significance. Fifty years ago, when Canberra was named, as we have just been reminded, your Grandfather, the great King George V, sat on the throne. It was his lot to encounter the blasts of war and to be called upon to confront great constitutional problems which the changes wrought by the war brought into existence. And he met them with a mixture of high intelligence and genius; met them so successfully that the new Constitutional Monarchy emerged. I shall always think of him myself as the first great Constitutional Monarch in the modern sense.

And then, your Father also had to encounter similar trials with characteristic courage and skill and he carried on

these great traditions and built on them. He was the second great Constitutional Monarch in the modern sense. And you, Ma'am, have succeeded him and you are the third.

The line runs strongly. This genius for monarchy has not disappeared. Indeed, the more I think about it, the more I believe that in our own time, our own Royal Family has managed magnificently to combine the place and dignity of the Throne with the ordinary life, the ordinary desires and needs of ordinary human beings. (Applause)

Now, of course, these great rulers over this period of time in which Canberra has been established, were not alone. There are many people here today who remember with great affection the late Queen Mary who became a tradition among her people. We all remember with a singular warmth of affection your Mother who sat on the Throne with your Father, George VI. (Applause) And if I may say so, we have seen, fortunately for us, so much of His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, that we have really taken him to our hearts and have come to regard him as, for all good purposes, an Australian. (Applause)

I mention these matters in the presence of our Queen because I think it is right that she should know how deeply those ideas are embedded in our own hearts and minds. We are her faithful people. We will continue to be her faithful people.

On a visit of this kind, it occurred to the Government that it might be agreeable to Her Majesty if we commemorated her visit in some way that would be of interest to her and of interest to His Royal Highness. Knowing Her Majesty's great interest in education, knowing in particular His Royal Highness' keen interest in scientific matters and in scientific research, the Government has decided to commemorate this occasion by establishing ten post-graduate fellowships a year, to be taken up by people after the degree of Doctor and to be held in physical and biological science. And with the very kind consent of Her Majesty, these will be known, in perpetuity as they go on and go on, as the Queen Elizabeth II Fellowships. (Applause)

I am also happy to tell you that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has taken a keen interest in this day and in this event. It has been considering what contribution it might make to Canberra to mark this occasion, and I think in the most imaginative fashion, the Government has, through the Prime Minister, communicated with me and has indicated that it is going to find a very substantial sum of money which will be spent, at our choice, on something that will commemorate the union, the connection between the two Parliaments, going back to the old days of Westminster Hall, either by a series of fountains in front of the new Parliament House, when we get it (I notice the President of the Senate nodded approvingly that time), or alternatively, by establishing a tower with a chime of bells in it - something, I confess, I have always wanted to see in this place. But whatever way it goes, this will be a contribution by the Government in the Old Country to the Government and Parliament and City in the New and, therefore, that again makes it a memorable occasion. (Applause)

But, Your Majesty, having said all that, at perhaps too great length, I want to come back to my own constant theme and that is that what marks this day as the most outstanding day, a day that we will always remember, is the fact that you are here.

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